

Wanted by the FBI

I got my FBI file today. ([Request yours!](#)) As I hoped, it's truly delightful. It has only minor redactions for reasons of personal privacy (basically, they deleted agents' names and so on). It all started when the—actually, I'll let the file tell the story:

February 6, from Washington Field to Chicago:

UNCLASSIFIED

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Precedence: ROUTINE

Case ID #: 288A-WF-238343 (Pending)

Title: UNSUB(s); US COURTS - VICTIM; COMPUTER INTRUSION - OTHER

Synopsis: To set lead to locate Aaron Swartz.

Enclosure(s): Attached is an Accurant Report for Swartz.

Details: The U.S. Courts implemented a pilot project offering free access to federal court records through the PACER system at seventeen federal depository libraries. Library personnel maintain login and password security and provide access to users from computers within the library. PACER normally carries an eight cents per page fee, however, by accessing from one of the seventeen libraries, users may search and download data for free.

Between September 4, 2008 and September 22, 2008, PACER was accessed by computers from outside the library utilizing login information from two libraries participating in the pilot project. The Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts reported that the PACER system was being inundated with requests. One request was being made every three seconds.

[...] The two accounts were responsible for downloading more than eighteen million pages with an approximate value of \$1.5 million.

[...] Data that was exfiltrated went to one of two Amazon IP addresses.

Investigation has determined that the Amazon IP address used to access the PACER system belongs to Aaron Swartz.

The following information was provided for the IP address:

Name: Aaron Swartz

Address: 349 Marshman Avenue, Highland Park, IL 60035

Telephone: 847-432-8857

A search in Accurant and Swartz's personal webpage confirmed this information. Swartz's social security account number is [...]. The telephone subscriber for telephone number [REDACTED] is [REDACTED].

NCIS report for Aaron Swartz was negative. A search for wages for Swartz at the Department of Labor was negative.

[...]

Washington Field Office requests that the North RA attempt to locate AARON SWARTZ, his vehicles, drivers license information and picture, and others, at 349 Marshman Avenue, Highland Park, IL 60035. Since SWARTZ is the potential subject of an ongoing investigation, it is requested that SWARTZ not be approached by agents.

February 15, Manassas, VA:

Set Lead 1: (Info)

[...]

AARON SWARTZ has a profile on the website LINKEDIN, at www.linkedin.com/in/aaronsw. SWARTZ is listed as a writer, hacker and activist based in the San Francisco Bay Area. SWARTZ's education includes Stanford University, Sociology, 2004. SWARTZ's experience includes the following:

[...]

SWARTZ has a profile on the website FACEBOOK. His networks include Stanford '08 and Boston, MA. The picture used in his profile was also used in an article about SWARTZ in THE NEW YORK TIMES.

SWARTZ's personal webpage, www.aaronsw.com, includes a section titled "Aaron Swartz: a life time of dubious accomplishments". In 2007, SWARTZ began working full-time as a member of the Long-Term Planning Committee for the Human Race (LTPCHR).

February 19, Manassas, VA:

On February 17, 2008 [sic], SA [REDACTED] received an email from [REACTED] Administrative Office of the US Courts, with links to two published articles regarding the compromise of the PACER system.

On February 12, 2009, [REACTED] published an article in THE NEW YORK TIMES titled "An Effort to Upgrade a Court Archive to Free and Easy". For the article, [REDACTED] interviewed [REDACTED] and AARON SWARTZ regarding the compromise of the PACER system.

The following information is found in the article: [...]

February 24, Chicago:

Synopsis: Lead covered by Chicago North RA

Enclosure(s): Illinois DL/ID Image of Swartz and Accurint Vehicle/Residence Reports for Swartz address.

Details: Attempted to locate AARON SWARTZ, his vehicles, drivers license information and picture, and others at 349 Marshman Avenue, Highland Park, IL 60035.

Successfully located drivers license photo for SWARTZ. Drove by address in an attempt to locate SWARTZ or vehicles related to the residence, but was unsuccessful. House is set on a deep lot, behind other houses on Marshman Avenue. This is a heavily wooded, dead-end street, with no other cars parked on the road making continued surveillance difficult to conduct without severely increasing the risk of discovery. However, drivers license and Accurint information lists address above. Other family members are listed as current residents and four vehicles are currently registered to Susan Swartz who resides at above address. Illinois database checks for SWARTZ yielded negative results. SWARTZ has no arrests, no registered vehicles or property.

Chicago considers this lead covered.

March 9, Manassas, VA:

AARON SWARTZ posted a weblog titled "NYT Personals" [on February 13 —AS] at <http://www.aaronsw.com/weblog>. In the weblog, SWARTZ quotes the NEW YORK TIMES article in which he was interviewed. SWARTZ also posts "Want to meet the man behind the headlines? Want to have the F.B.I. open up a file on you as well? Interested in some kind of bizarre celebrity product endorsement? I'm available in Boston and New York all this month".

March 23, Manassas, VA:

On March 10, 2009, [REDACTED] of THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE US COURTS (US COURTS) provided the following information:

[...] When asked to clarify how a user knows what constitutes unauthorized access and how a user would have known that they had to be in one of the seventeen libraries to access PACER, [REDACTED] had [REDACTED] prepare a response.

[REDACTED] provided the following information:

AARON SWARTZ would have known his access was unauthorized because it was with a password that did not belong to him.

April 14, Manassas, VA

On 04/14/2009, SA [REDACTED] called (847) 432-8857 in an attempt to speak to AARON SWARTZ. A female answered the telephone and stated that SWARTZ was not available [...]. SA [REDACTED] left a message for SWARTZ to return her call and the female stated that she would email that message to SWARTZ.

SWARTZ called SA [REDACTED] and left a message on her voicemail stating he could be reached at [...]. This number is a T-Mobile cellular number and returned negative results in Telephone Applications.

SA [REACTED] spoke to SWARTZ, at telephone number [...], and explained that the FBI is looking for information on how SWARTZ was able to compromise the PACER system so that the US COURTS could implement repairs to the system and get PACER running again. SWARTZ stated that he would have to talk to his attorney first and would call SA [REDACTED] back at a later time.

April 16, Manassas, VA:

On 04/16/2009, SA [REDACTED] returned a telephone call to ANDREW GOOD, (617) [...]. GOOD is AARON SWARTZ's attorney in Boston, MA. GOOD wanted assurance that if SWARTZ was interviewed, what he said would not be used to jeopardize him. SA [REDACTED] explained that assurance could not be given but that we were in an information gathering phase. GOOD refused the interview without the assurance.

April 20, Washington Field Office:

CASE ID #: 288A-WF-238943 (Closed)

[...]

CCIPS Attorney [REDACTED] closed the office's case. Based on the CCIPS closing, Washington Field is closing this case as of this communication.

I've just sent away for the CCIPS file.

You should follow me on twitter [here](#).

October 5, 2009